

553 among Iloko and Kagayan who have been Christians for centuries, as
171 well as among the tribes that inhabit the Mountain Province and some
of whom have started embracing Christianity only comparatively
recently, the Negritos alone excepted, the custom of changing the
name of a person at the time of prolonged or dangerous sickness is
almost universal, to the dismay of Government officials and Church
dignitaries, as such a practice brings nothing but confusion in the
records, especially among pagan tribes, who have not yet adopted
family names and continue to give each individual his own special
personal name. I have discussed sufficiently the ideas of the Isneg
about the matter, at the beginning of my treatment about Isneg
names, without having to explain them any further, but some other
points should be considered here.

553 Some Isneg keep their original name all through life, others have
551 it changed once or twice, rarely more often. The change usually
takes place in infancy, more rarely in youth, and no ceremonies
seem to be connected with the same: everything happens as in the
case of the giving of the first name immediately after birth. It may
happen also, in a few isolated cases, that a man or a woman of mature
age gets or takes another name. So, at Kumaw, a girl called *Unidy*
gave the name of her father as *Bélan*, at the time of her baptism, a few
years ago, while that same man is known all over the municipal district
as *Okkón*. Although it seems that the fellow must already have been
called *Okkón* at the time of the baptism of his daughter, who was
married recently, his old name *Bélan* must have clung to him for a
long time, otherwise his daughter would not have known it.

The most important reason for changing a name is, as has been
stated repeatedly, the sickness of the child (*áno mawé ya takit*, "so
that sickness go away") A few Isneg have their name changed once
or twice merely through caprice, whether it be a whim of their own or
one of their parents (in case they are still small): a certain name
comes to their mind, for one reason or another that name catches their
fancy and ends by pleasing them, and away goes the old name; the
new name will be adopted from now on as the distinctive appellation
of the girl or boy in question.

551 At least in the municipal district of Conner, and perhaps also
768 elsewhere, a very serious reason for changing the name of a baby is
the death of one of its parents. As will be seen in a subsequent
chapter, the Isneg have a certain fear of the dead and usually prefer
that they stay where they are: they do not want them to interfere

THE ISNEG LIFE CYCLE

115

with the affairs of the living. Now in this case the Isneg deem it very probable that the dead parent will continue to be fond of his child, and perhaps try to approach it and fondle it, as he was wont to do before his death; but this must inevitably be exceedingly detrimental to the well-being of the little one, so the best way to prevent all such dangerous trifling is to change the name of the infant in question, in order to force the soul of the dead parent to forget all about his offspring. He will be looking for the babe under its old name, but here the living will have got the better of him: the new name, the new personality of the little one, will completely baffle the all-too-fond parent, and the living will be rid of the annoying interference of the dead. *Séno maligpanda adyá kaduduwána ya ádrén adyá ababbá*, "So that his soul forget the name of the child": this was the reason for the custom given me by the Isneg themselves. What would be the use of making the dead forget the name of the child if "name" was not more or less synonymous with "personality"?

Formerly a stranger travelling in Apayaw must forcibly have been struck by the reluctance of the Isneg to tell his name. I say "formerly", as nowadays the Isneg has been obliged to tell his name on so many different occasions, for instance at school, in the judgment hall, and so on, that this reluctance is fast disappearing. However, it is still to be found in many remote corners, and more especially with grown-up and old men and women: when you ask their name they invariably tell some companion to answer you in their stead. Just exactly what is the reason of this I have not yet been able to ascertain; when questioned about it, the Isneg either deny the custom altogether, if they are not very familiar with you, or else say that they are ignorant of the reason of its existence.

The same reticence takes place with reference to the names of the dead: this has been touched upon before, and the reason, as explained by the Isneg, has been given at the same time. The prohibition of telling the name of a dead person does not last indefinitely, nor does it equally affect all persons. When some time has elapsed since the death of a certain Isneg whose name you would like to know, your informant will usually say: "*Natáyyin* (he is dead already)", with a look of wonder on his face, as if to say: "What is the use of wanting to know his name, he is dead already, he has lost his name together with his life"; but if you insist, he will give it seemingly without difficulty. So also unrelated persons are much less reluctant than near relatives, when there is question of telling the name of the dead. Be-